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Connally Backs the Warren Report

Associated Press Wirephoto

Governor John B. Connally Jr. of Texas at news session

By MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

AUSTIN, Tex., Nov. 23—Gov. John B. Connally Jr. said today that the Warren Commission's findings on President Kennedy's assassination should be accepted as final unless compelling new evidence is brought forth. A new investigation is "neither warranted, justified or desirable," he said. The Governor, who was riding in a Dallas motorcade with President Kennedy, was wounded in the chest, right wrist and left leg when the President was assassinated. He still carries a bullet fragment just above his left kneecap. Mr. Connally said today that many criticisms of the Warren Commission's investigation might have "political overtones." He said he was shocked "that in the backlash of tragedy, journalistic scavengers such as Mark

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Lane attempt to impugn the motives" of members of the commission. Mr. Connally would not elaborate on his suggestion of political overtones. "I am going to let it rest right there," he said.

He said he had not read any of the books that have criticized the Warren Commission's findings, including "Rush to Judgment," written by Mr. Lane, a New York lawyer.

The Governor said that he had read press reports and book reviews on the books he was talking about and that he always accepted as accurate whatever he read in newspapers.

Mr. Connally decided to hold the news conference, at the State Capitol, after, he said, he had been besieged with questions about a Life magazine article this week.

In the article the Governor repeated that he disagreed with the Warren Commission's finding that he and President Kennedy were both hit by one of three shots fired down on the open limousine in front of the Texas School Book Depository.

Sole Disagreement

The Governor said today that his sole disagreement with the Warren Commission's findings centered on which bullet struck him.

"I am convinced, beyond any doubt, that I was not struck by the first bullet. I know that I heard the first shot, and I turned to see what happened, and that I was struck by a second shot. The third shot struck the President and not me," he said.

The Warren Commission found that there were three shots and that one went through President Kennedy's neck and into Governor Connally's body, that one shot hit the President in the head, and that one shot probably missed both men.

Governor Connally said the shot that hit him did not hit President Kennedy.

Reviewed Film

The Governor said he had had no intention of adding fuel to the flames of dissension when he agreed to review a motion picture of the assassination for Life magazine and to point out just when he was struck.

He said, "They asked me to do it and I agreed."

The Life magazine article was not one of those with "political overtones," the Governor said.

Mr. Connally, a close friend of President Johnson, said he had discussed "very casually" with Mr. Johnsom some of the criticisms of the Warren Commission investigation. But he said he and the President had never "sat down" and discussed the Warren Commission report itself.

He did not reveal Mr. Johnson's feelings about the criticisms.

Governor Connally said he did not regard his own views as to which shot wounded him as casting any doubt on the validity of the Warren Commission's over-all findings.

The Governor said he was satisfied that the shot that hit him was fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, named by the Warren Commission as the assassin of President Kennedy. The Governor said he did not believe there was more than one person involved in the shooting.

"There are certain facts about this assassination which may never be known," he said. He added that he did not consider his memory or his judgment to be infallible.

He said he had not even heard the shot that wounded him in the chest, although his wife, Idanell Connally, he said, heard three shots.

Lane Replies

Mark Lane said here yesterday that Governor Connally "has displayed an abysmal ignorance of the implications of his own testimony."

"If the bullet that struck President Kennedy did not also strike the Governor, then there was no lone assassin," Mr. Lane said.

He charged that the Governor was "questioning the loyalty and motivation of those who will not accept a false governmental edict" while "the American people" had made Mr. Lane's book a best-seller.

Comment in East Europe

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Nov. 23—East European radio stations marked the third anniversary yesterday of President Kennedy's assassination with extensive commentaries on the controversy over the findings of the Warren Commission.

The Warsaw radio asserted that two-thirds of the American people did not believe the Warren report's conclusions. It said the overwhelming majority of Americans believed that world events would have developed "differently, in a better way," had Mr. Kennedy lived.

A commentator on the Prague radio declared, "It is impossible to say that the Warren report is true."

The broadcasts were monitored by Radio Free Europe and made available here.

The Czechoslovak commentator said three main conclusions must be drawn from the report:

"First, it is impossible that Kennedy was killed by Oswald alone. Second, the report is a forgery. Third, the Warren Commission could not by itself forge the truth about the attempt. The commission must have been helped or forced to do so by the top members of the American state apparatus."

The Sofia radio said most Americans would prefer President Kennedy to President Johnson, and would vote for Senator Robert F. Kennedy in future Presidential elections because of "the unpopularity of the foreign political course of Johnson, and Robert Kennedy's position on the establishment of peace in Vietnam."

Text of Governor Connally's Statement

Special to The New York Times

AUSTIN, Tex., Nov. 23—Following is a statement made by Gov. John B. Connally Jr. today in discussing the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas three years ago:

So that there will be no misunderstanding or misinterpretation of this news conference today, let me first speak to you from a prepared text.

I want to make it abundantly clear that I have no desire to prolong or perpetuate the stark memories of the tragedy of three years ago. This conference has been arranged solely as a result of the widespread request of newsmen.

I will take just a moment to reiterate and to clarify once again the events of that day. Let me point out that this information is not new. It is precisely the information I recalled and related in a television interview from a hospital bed in Dallas on Nov. 27, just a few days following the assassination.

It is precisely the way I related it in testimony to the Warren Commission. It also is precisely the way it had been recalled by me in interviews since that time.

I am convinced, beyond any doubt, that I was not struck by the first bullet. I know that I heard the first shot, that I turned to see what happened and that I was struck by a second shot. The third shot struck the President and not me.

As I said earlier, this testimony was presented to the Warren Commission. They chose to disagree, which is their privilege. I maintain my original view, always shall.

I want to make it very clear. however, that simply because I disagree with the Warren Commission on this one detail does not mean that I disagree with the substance of their over-all findings.

I think the commission did an outstanding job under difficult circumstances. Each of the members of that commission, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Senator Richard B. Russell, Senator John Sherman Cooper, Representative Hale Boggs, Representative Gerald Ford, Mr. Allen Dulles and Mr. John J. McCloy, are men of unquestioned integrity, of long and devoted service to their nation, men whose dedication to the task of seeking truth in these circumstances I would never question, and men whose patriotism has been manifested so many times in so many ways over such a long period that it now is somewhat shocking to me that in the backlash of tragedy, journalistic scavengers such as Mark Lane, attempting to impugn the motives of these members individually, cast doubts upon the commission as a whole and question the credibility of the Government itself.

I think it is time that we pause and reflect on who these individuals are and rather than calling for a further investigation of the assassination, which in my judgment is neither warranted, justified or desirable, we should turn our attention to doing a little research on and evaluation of the credentials of the self-appointed experts who, with no evidence, no new facts, nevertheless use distortion, inference, innuendo, in order to cast doubts and create confusion

I suspect that a searching investigation into their own credentials will divulge that their motives have political overtones and that their views have been given prominence out of proportion to their value.